



Self-esteem, anxiety and motivation – the effect of psychological factors on sport performance

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<p>Opinnäytetyön työosana valmistunut opas, Itsetunto, jännittyneisyys ja motivaatio – psyykkisten tekijöiden vaikutus urheilusuoritukseen, tehtiin ensisijaisesti suomalaisille juniorijääkiekkovalmentajille hyödynnettäväksi valmennustyössä.</p> <p>Opas tehtiin, koska kyseisillä aihealueilla nähtiin olevan oleellinen vaikutus urheilusuorituksen laatuun. Nähtiin myös, että valmentajien tieto kyseisistä aihealueista ja aihealueiden kehittämisestä on puutteellista.</p> <p>Projektin päätavoitteena oli tehdä helposti luettava ja ymmärrettävä opas juniorijääkiekkovalmentajien käyttöön. Oppaan tarkoituksena oli antaa valmentajille oleellista tietoa kyseisistä aihealueista, niiden vaikutuksesta urheilusuoritukseen, sekä miten kyseisiä aihealueita voidaan kehittää.</p> <p>Opas koostuu kolmesta pääosiesta. Osioita ovat itsetunto, ahdistuneisuus, sekä motivaatio. Kussakin osiossa käydään läpi oleellinen teoreettinen tausta, vaikutus urheilusuoritukseen, sekä kyseisen osa-alueen kehittäminen.</p> <p>Opas on tehokas apuväline niiden urheilijoiden auttamiseen, joilla on ongelmia itsetunnon kanssa, liiallista ahdistuneisuutta tai puutteita motivaatiossa.</p> <p>Opas kirjoitettiin suomeksi, jotta se olisi mahdollisimman helposti luettavissa ja ymmärrettävissä, sekä näin ollen hyödynnettävissä suomalaisten juniorijääkiekkovalmentajien toimesta.</p> <p>Myös muiden lajien urheilijat ja valmentajat saavat paljon hyödynnettävissä olevaa tietoa oppaasta.</p>	
Keywords Itsetunto, ahdistuneisuus, motivaatio	

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<p>The project-part of the Bachelor's thesis was a guide called Self esteem, anxiety and motivation – the effect of psychological factors on sport performance. The guide was made primarily for Finnish junior ice hockey coaches to exploit in coaching.</p> <p>The guide was made because the particular areas were seen to have an essential effect on the quality of sport performance. It was also seen that the coaches knowledge of the particular areas and the development of the areas is deficient.</p> <p>The main objective of the project was to produce an easy to read and easy to understand guide for junior hockey coaches to use. The purpose of the guide was to give the coaches essential information about the topics, their influence on sport performance and how to develop those.</p> <p>The guide consists of three main chapters. Chapter one deals with self esteem, chapter two deals with anxiety, and chapter three deals with motivation. Each chapter presents essential theoretical framework, effect on sport performance and the development of the particular area.</p> <p>The guide is an effective tool to help athletes that have problems with self esteem, excessive anxiety or insufficient motivation.</p> <p>The guide was written in Finnish to be as easy to read and as easy to understand as possible and thus exploitable by Finnish junior ice hockey coaches.</p> <p>Athletes and coaches involved in other sports also get a lot of useful information from the guide.</p>	
Keywords Self-esteem, anxiety, motivation	

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1 Introduction

Nowadays many youth athletes have the physical, technical and tactical skills to be very successful in their own sport. In fact so many that the differences between athletes above-mentioned skills are very slight on the elite level. When the differences between physical, technical and tactical skills are slight, psychological skills are the ones that make the difference.

Many coaches think that an athlete either is or is not psychologically strong. They think that the psychological strength is part of human personality and it cannot be changed or developed. Part of this thought is true. Some people actually are better and stronger psychologically than others. But the thought, that psychological qualities cannot be developed, is totally wrong. Especially junior coaches have a big role and responsibility in child's psychological growth. In addition to teaching physical, technical and tactical skills coaches should also teach psychological skills.

This guide contains information about those psychological qualities that I think are the most important ones thinking of an athletes' development to professional level. The guide consists of three main sections: self-esteem, anxiety and motivation. The objective of this guide is to give the general understanding of each quality to juniors and coaches. It also contains information about how these qualities affect sport performance, what are the benefits or disadvantages of them and how to develop them.

The first section of the guide discusses about self-esteem. Self-esteem has an influence in all human behavior (Autio & Kaski 2005, 90). People with high self-esteem are usually more successful in life than those with low self-esteem (Heino 2000, 47-49). The concept of self-confidence often arises in sport. It does not matter how talented an athlete is physically and technically, if he or she lacks self-confidence. If the athlete does not trust in his own abilities he or she may not succeed in his or her sport.

The self-esteem model by Borba & Reasoner (in Aho & Laine 1997, 20-67) is an effective tool to build up self-esteem. That is why the model is an essential part of this guide. Also useful guidelines about building self-confidence are presented on the guide.

The second part of the guide discusses about anxiety. Excessive anxiety is a factor bothering many athletes. It affects sport performance negatively and in worst case scenario can even get a promising young athlete to give up on his or her sport. It may limit bodily functions, distract cognitive functions or generate unusual or undesirable behavior. Stress and arousal are factors closely related to anxiety. These factors are also defined on the guide. The guide contains different anxiety reduction techniques as well as some practical tips on how to control anxiety.

The final part of the guide discusses about motivation. Many consider motivation as a part of personality that cannot be changed. This is not true. It is only laziness of the coaches to say things like this. Motivation can and should be developed. Every individual can be motivated to do things. Coaches just have to find the right way to deal with each individual. Practicing is not always fun or motivating in anyway. Sometimes it is a challenge for coaches to get their athletes to do all the unpleasant work required for optimal development. Goal setting is seen as one of the most effective ways to enhance motivation and to improve performance. That is why goal setting is also an important part of this guide. The guide also contains other useful guidelines to improve motivation.

The guide is intended primarily for junior athletes and coaches working with juniors, but also adult athletes and coaches working with adults get a lot of exploitable information from the guide.

2 Theoretical framework for self-esteem

Self-esteem consists of people's experiences and perceptions about themselves (Heino 2000, 46). It is associated with the human way of detecting its existence, the ability to know its strengths and weaknesses, and accept them (Aho & Laine 1997, 20-21). Concepts associated with self-esteem include self-satisfaction, self-appreciation and self-confidence. Also the concepts of self-love, pride and vanity will rise up when talking about self-esteem. (Scheinin 2003, 8.)

People with strong self-esteem feel that they are valuable and appreciate themselves (Rosenberg 1979, 54). They can appreciate also other people, are able to give positive feedback and can deal with authority figures without considering them as a threat (Keltikangas-Järvinen 1994, 18-20). Instead people with low self-esteem are unsatisfied with and underestimate themselves. (Rosenberg 1979, 54.) They see other people's competence and success as a threat and will not tolerate authority figures (Keltikangas-Järvinen 1994, 18-20).

Self-esteem is strongly associated with self-assessment (Aho & Laine 1997, 20-23). According to Keltikangas-Järvinen (1994, 47) self-esteem can be assessed according to that how much a person can see positive qualities in themselves. The more positive qualities a person can see the better the self-esteem.

Although self-esteem cannot be measured by any technical processes, it is evident all the time. Different facial expressions and gestures, posture, handshake, talking style, how a person steps into a room and general appearance all tell something about a person's self-esteem. However, first impression may be false. According to Cacciatore, Korteniemi-Poikela and Huovinen (2008, 12-14) people can learn to act that they have a strong self-esteem.

2.1 Self-perception

People's perceptions about their different qualities consist of several different self-images. This is called self-perception. Self-images are divided into physical, social and psychological self-image. Physical self-images contain strength, speed, agility etc. Social self-image is a person's perception about how he or she gets along with other people and how they see him or her. Psychological self-images contain attitudes, thinking and feelings. Above listed self-images are all important in sports, but especially physical self-image is significantly pronounced. (Heino 2000, 46.)

People that have a strong self-esteem usually have a realistic, slightly optimistic self-perception (Aho & Laine 1997, 22-23). They highlight their strengths and are not afraid of admitting their weaknesses when they describe themselves (Keltikangas-Järvinen 1994, 55). If there is a big difference between self-perception and true me, psychological problems and socially troublesome defence mechanisms may occur. People can act confident to hide their true, weak self-esteem. (Aho & Laine 1997, 19.)

People often have some kind of picture about what they would like to be like. This is called the ideal self. The ideal self can differ from true self-perception significantly. This may have a negative influence on the build-up of self-perception. A person feels deficient and incapable because he or she is not even near of the level that he or she would like to be. On the other hand if the ideal self does not differ much from the own self-perception it may bring the necessary extra kick for development. (Heino 2000, 47.)

2.2 Strong self-esteem

According to Rosenberg (1979, 54) people with strong self-esteem feel themselves valuable and appreciate themselves. External signs of strong self-esteem conclude good posture, brisk handshake, applying eye contact with people, loud and clear style of talk, and general confident appearance (Cacciatore et al. 2008, 12-14). People with strong self-esteem see a lot of positive qualities in themselves. They can deal with disappoint-

ments and failures better than people with low self-esteem. A person with strong self-esteem can separate his or her performance from his or her persona. Thus, performing badly does not mean that the person is bad. A person with strong self-esteem can appreciate others, is able to receive critique from authority figures and give positive feedback to others. A person is confident when working on groups. One sticks to his or her opinions, is him- or herself and has the ability to be proud of his or her performance. They accept challenges and do not care about other people's opinions that much. (Keltikangas-Järvinen 1994, 18-20.)

2.3 Self-confidence

Sport psychologists define self-confidence as the belief that one can perform a desired behavior successfully. The desired behavior can be anything, the main thing is that one believes in his or her abilities to get the job done. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 323.) In sports self-confidence is defined as a social cognitive construct that can be more either traitlike or statelike. Traitlike self-confidence is part of your personality, and changes very little so being very stable. Statelike self-confidence is very unstable. It changes from day to day and from situation to situation. According to Vealey & Knight (in Weinberg & Gould 2007, 323-324.) self-confidence can be multidimensional and consist of several aspects. Aspects include confidence in own abilities to perform tasks requiring physical skills, confidence in own abilities to use psychological skills, confidence to use perceptual skills (decision making, adaptability), confidence in own level of physical fitness and training status, and confidence in own ability to learn and to develop skills.

The level of self-confidence and its effect on performance can be represented with an inverted U. When the level of self-confidence is low so is the level of performance. Increases in the level of self-confidence enhance the performance till a certain point. This point is the optimal level of self-confidence. Further increases in the level of self-confidence produce decrements in performance. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 325-326.)

Low level of self-confidence affects performance negatively. There are many athletes with physical skills to succeed, but fails to perform at their best under pressure. Often this is because of the lack of self-confidence. For example an athlete might perform successfully constantly in practice but when competing he or she cannot handle the pressure of competition and thus the level of performance decreases. Lack of self-confidence increases anxiety and break concentration. Athletes with low self-confidence focus on their weaknesses rather than on their strengths. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 325-327.)

When the level of self-confidence is optimal the performance is at its best. Optimal self-confidence means that an athlete is so convinced to reach his or her goal that he or she strives hard to do so. Optimal level of self-confidence does not guarantee good performance, but it is essential to reaching full potential. A strong belief in own abilities also helps dealing with mistakes and errors. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 325-327.)

Overconfidence affects performance negatively. When the level of confidence is too high an athlete overestimates his abilities. This kind of athletes belief that they do not need to prepare themselves or exert effort to get the job done. Overconfidence occurs usually in situations when a top rated team takes its opponent for granted. They think that all they have to do to win is to show up, and thus they might be poorly prepared. However, overconfidence is much less a problem than underconfidence. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 325-326.)

3 Theoretical framework for anxiety

Anxiety is a negative emotional state. It involves nervousness, worry, and fear. Thus, anxiety has a component called cognitive anxiety. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 78.) Cognitive anxiety shows up as troubles to remember or execute any given task. Also executing any performance in own ability level might be difficult when in a state of anxiety. (Yli-Piipari, Liukkonen & Jaakkola 2009, 54.) Anxiety also has a component of somatic anxiety. Somatic anxiety is the degree of physical activation perceived. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 78.) It refers to body functions. Somatic anxiety shows up as a feel of pressure in chest, breathing problems, dizziness, or some other pain. (Yli-Piipari ym. 2009, 54.)

Anxiety is also divided into state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety changes all the time even during competition. For example in ice hockey the level of state anxiety might be slightly elevated before a game, a lower level once he or she is settled into the pace of game, and then an extremely high level in the final minutes of a close game. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 79.) State anxiety is defined as an emotional state “characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” (Spielberger 1966, 17).

Trait anxiety is part of the personality. It predisposes an individual to see different situations as more threatening than they really are. Thus the level of state anxiety increases. Usually, the higher the level of trait anxiety a person has, the higher the level of state anxiety is. (Spielberger 1966, 17).

3.1 Recognizing and measuring anxiety

According to Karageorghis (2007) anxiety occur in three different levels:

- Cognitive (thought process)
- Somatic (physical response)

- Behavioral (patterns of behavior)

Cognitive signs of anxiety include for example difficulty in concentration, negative thoughts, lack of self-confidence and fear of failure. Somatic signs of anxiety include increased heart rate, excessive sweating, muscular tension and constant need to urinate. Behavioral signs of anxiety are for example playing safe, avoidance of eye contact, biting fingernails and introversion. (Karageorghis 2007)

There are many tests to measure the level of anxiety. Many of them need the help of a psychologist, which is often impossible to exploit in junior sports because of limited resources. Psychologists have developed tests that coaches can keep to their athletes to get some kind of image about the level of the anxiety of their athletes. These tests include Martens' Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) and Spielbergers Trait Anxiety Inventory (TAI) that measure the level of trait anxiety. State Anxiety can be measured with Martens' Competitive State Anxiety Inventory (CSAI) and with Spielbergers State Anxiety Inventory (SAI). A test used to measure both trait- and state anxiety is the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) developed by Spielberger, Gorsuch. and Lushene. (Cox 1998, 95-96).

3.2 Stress

Stress is closely related to anxiety. According to McGrath (1970, 20.), stress can be defined as "a substantial imbalance between demand (physical and/or psychological) and response capability, under conditions where failure to meet that demand has important consequences." A person might get stressed if he or she feels incapable of meeting the demands and expectations placed on him or her. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 80.)

McGrath (1970, 20) proposed, that stress consists of four interrelated stages:

- Environmental demand
- Perception of demand
- Stress response

- Behavioral consequences

In the first stage an environmental demand is placed for an athlete. The demand may be physical or psychological. Second stage is the athletes' perception of the demand. All people don't see demands the same way, meaning that the same demand may have either positive or negative response depending on the athletes' personality. In the third stage an athlete reacts either physically or psychologically. The reaction may show up as fear and worry (cognitive state anxiety), or increased physical activation (somatic state anxiety), or both at the same time. This stage is the stage of stress response. The fourth stage is the actual behavior of the athlete under stress. Does performance deteriorate or does it improve? After the final stage of the stress process the cycle starts again from the first stage. If an athlete performs poorly because of stress and other people laugh at him, next time when an environmental demand is placed on him or her he or she will have an additional demand because of the negative social evaluation. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 82-83.)

4 Theoretical framework for motivation

The word motivation is led from the word motive, which means the desire, drive or will to do something. Motives lead people consciously or unconsciously toward certain goals. (Peltonen & Ruohotie 1992, 16.) It can be simply defined as the direction and intensity of effort (Sage 1977, teoksessa Weinberg & Gould 2007, 51). The direction of effort means person's interest to approach certain situations. The intensity of effort means how much a person is willing to do to reach his or her goal. The direction and intensity of effort usually have a connection although they are two separate things. This means for example that an athlete that always arrives early to the practice usually is fully concentrated during the practice session. Contrarily an athlete that is often late from the start of a practice session might not give his or her best during it. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 51.)

Motivation can be viewed from three different perspectives (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 53-54.):

- Trait-centered view
- Situation-centered view
- Interactional view

From the trait-centered view motivated behavior is primarily seen as a part of individual characteristics. Roughly said a person is born as a winner or loser. The situation-centered view is in direct contrast to trait-centered view. It contends that the level of motivation is primarily determined by situation. For example motivation can be high on competitive situations but low on training. The third view is the interactional view. Interactional view suggests that motivation results neither solely from personal factors nor situational factors. From this view the best way to understand motivation is to examine how these two set of factors interact. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 53-54.)

The source of motivation can be either internal or external. The sources of extrinsic motivation are from the surrounding environment of an athlete. External sources of

motivation include trophies, team jackets, money, pleasing parents or friends and so on. Intrinsic motivation is a bit harder to define. It comes from within a person. A person has an internal will to do something without caring about external sources of motivation. The only definite motivators beyond question are hunger and thirst. This is associated with the motivation to survive. But it does not explain why certain athletes keep on playing although their doctors have told them not to. (Cox, in Bull 1997, 6-7.)

Motivation is also divided as primary and secondary. The primary source of motivation is derived from the activity itself. For example a hockey player may have a primary source of motivation to score a goal. Secondary source of motivation follows the primary. For the hockey player the secondary source of motivation could be to please the coach or parents. (Cox, in Bull 1997, 8.)

Both primary and secondary source of motivation can be either positive or negative. Often they are both, but never at the same time. In sports an athlete can perform either well (primary positive) or poorly (primary negative). Constantly poorly performing athletes' motivation to continue within his or her sport begins to diminish. The athlete no longer derives sufficient satisfaction from participating if he or she continuously performs poorly. An example of a secondary source of motivation that can be either positive or negative is the crowd. Home crowd gives the home team an edge by supporting them (secondary positive). Vice versa when playing away you have the crowd against you (secondary negative). (Cox, in Bull 1997, 9-10.)

4.1 Goal setting

According to Locke's definition goal is the objective of activity, a thing that an individual tries to reach (Locke, Shaw, Saari & Latham 1981). Goals can be set by individuals to themselves or to their group, or by groupmembers to the group as a unit or to individuals of the group (Zander 1971, 5). Goals can be either subjective or objective. Subjective goals are general statements like "I want to do my best". Subjective goals cannot be measured. Objective goals are measurable. They focus on "attaining a specific standard of proficiency on a task, usually within a specified time" (Locke, et al.

1981). Objective goals are focused on outcome, performance, or process (Burton, Naylor, & Holliday 2001; Hardy, Jones & Gould 1996). Sport psychological literature is focused on objective goals (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 346).

Goal setting is seen to have an influence on sport performance mechanistically (directly) and cognitively (indirectly). Mechanistically a goal is seen to influence performance in four different ways: they direct attention on important elements of the skill being performed, they mobilize performer efforts, they prolong performer persistence, and they develop new learning strategies. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 351.) Cognitively goals are seen to influence an athletes' psychological state, like self-confidence, anxiety and satisfaction (Burton 1989; Garland 1985). According to Burton (1989) athletes setting mainly goals focused on outcome often has a higher level of anxiety and weaker self-confidence than athletes setting goals focused on improving performance.

There are several researches made about the functionality of goal setting programs. Psychologists have studied the functionality of goal setting especially in business world. The result of the studies is clear, goal setting works extremely well. Over 90 percent of 500 studies show that goal setting improves performance. (Weinberg & Gould 2007, 349.) The results of these studies are supported by five meta-analyses. Meta-analyses included 17 – 53 research and 1278 – 6635 subjects. According to these meta-analyses the performance improved by 8,4 % - 16 %. (Chidester & Grigsby 1984; Hunter & Schmidt 1983; Mento, Steel & Karren 1987; Tubbs 1991; Wood, Mento & Locke 1987.) Kylo & Landers (1995) made a meta-analysis about the functionality of goal setting in exercise and sport. The meta-analysis included 36 researches, and the results were similar. Burton, Naylor & Holliday (2001) found out that in 44 out of 56 (78 %) research related to sport and exercise, the effect of goal setting on the improvement of sport performance was moderate or strong.

5 Empirical part

5.1 Project planning

I started with an idea to make a guidebook about psychological coaching for junior ice-hockey coaches. I started with mind mapping. I wrote down psychological factors to consider when working with junior ice hockey players. Pretty soon I realized that I wouldn't have time to cover all of the factors.

I wanted to clearly define all of the factors I would conclude in my thesis. I had an idea that I will also provide ways to develop all of the qualities I conclude in my thesis. I started to narrow down the mind map. Step by step I crossed out some of the qualities. I was left with, in my opinion, the three most important psychological factors affecting the performance and the development of a junior ice hockey player. Those qualities were self-esteem, anxiety and motivation.

After I had made it clear what qualities I would conclude in the project, I started to research existing literature about the qualities and how to develop the areas. I went to different libraries to search for information. I did also search information from the internet and use the lesson materials I had gotten. I started the reading on 6th of June in 2011 and I set a goal to be finished with reading at the end of August in 2011. I was able to gather a lot of information from various different sources about self-esteem, anxiety and motivation. When I was familiarized with the information I started to work on the guidebook. I had planned a timeframe for the writing from the beginning of September in 2011 to the end of October in 2011.

I started to work on the project with few basic objectives. First of all, I wanted to make the guide as easy to read and as easy to understand as possible. That is why I decided to use a lot of examples in the guide. Secondly, I wanted to make the guide especially for Finnish coaches. That is why I decided to write it in Finnish. Third objective that I had when started to work was that I wanted to clearly explain the definition, the effect in sport performance and the development of each psychological quality concluded in the guide.

5.2 Project implementation

The guide was divided into three main sections. Each section starts with a clear and broad definition of the quality at hand. It was essential to clearly define what the quality contains since coaches knowledge about the areas may be limited or false. The definition-part of each section was followed by the paragraphs that process the benefits and/or disadvantages of the quality in sport. The last part of each section dealt with the development of the quality.

The first section dealt with self-esteem. I started the writing process from self-esteem because in my opinion it is the most important psychological quality in sports. Without self-esteem it is impossible to succeed in any areas of life. The section started with a definition of self-esteem. The definition of self-esteem included paragraphs about self-perception and peoples division in winners and losers.

The definition-part of the section about self-esteem was followed by the part that defines what strong self-esteem contains and how to get there. This part helps coaches to identify athletes with low self-esteem. The self-esteem model of Borba and Reaoner was introduced in this part. Finally it also identifies the hallmarks of strong self-esteem.

The first section of the guide also contained a separate part about self-confidence. This was because self-confidence was seen as the most crucial factor about self-esteem affecting sport performance. The part dealing with self-confidence provides general definition and the levels of it, its benefits to sport performance, and the development of it.

The second section of the guide dealt with anxiety. The section included the definition of anxiety, and also definitions of stress and arousal, that are closely related to anxiety. In the anxiety-part of the section, in addition to definition of it, information about how to recognize and measure anxiety was given. The stress-part of the section provided information about stressors in addition to definition of it.

The definition-part of the section was followed by the part that identified the effect of anxiety and arousal to sport performance. This part included the drive theory, the in-

verted U-hypothesis and the IZOF-model. The last part of the section was about how to control and reduce anxiety. It included different kind of relaxation techniques, imagery and some practical guidelines.

The last section of the guide dealt with motivation. The first part of the section clearly defines what motivation is and how it can be approached. It presents the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, primary and secondary motivation and the motivational climate.

The definition-part of the section is followed by a paragraph including guidelines to build and develop motivation. The section also contains a separate paragraph about goal setting. That is because goal setting was seen as one of the most effective ways to build motivation. The part about goal setting includes the definition of a goal, the effect of goal setting in sport performance, and the basic principles of goal setting.

5.3 Project outcome

The end result of the project was that I finished with a 47 page guide. The guide was divided into three main sections including several subtitles.

I was satisfied with the outcome. The main objective of the project was to produce an easy to read and easy to understand guide for junior hockey coaches to use. I think I ended up with a useful tool for junior hockey coaches to use. Actually, although the primary idea was to make a guide especially for junior hockey coaches to use, I think coaches from many other sports could also find a lot of useful information about the psychological factors dealt with. Majority of the information and developmental ideas presented on the guide are also useful for adult athletes and coaches working with adults.

The guide was handed out for a head of coaching that I know well to read through and give feedback of. After I got the feedback I made some minor changes but the general feedback was positive. It was seen that the guide would be a useful tool for the coaches

in the club to use with athletes struggling with the psychological factors dealt with on the guide. I also gave the guide for one U-16 national team player to read through. I asked him to evaluate the readability and understandability of the guide. I also wanted to know if this particular player had found some factors affecting himself from the guide.

6 Summary & Discussion

The objective of the guide was to provide the basic knowledge about psychological factors limiting sport performance and tools to develop them.

The main reason why I did this guide was that there are many physically talented, but psychologically weak athletes that are left alone with their problems because of the lack of knowledge of the coaches. Many coaches, in my opinion, do not even think about how to develop the psychological qualities needed in sports, but rather concentrate only on how to develop physical, technical and tactical skills. I was satisfied with the outcome of the project. This guide is a useful tool for coaches to help athletes to overcome their psychological weaknesses.

I started the planning of the project by using my own experiences as a player and as a coach. I wanted to think from the perspective of a player and also from the perspective of a coach what are the most important psychological qualities needed in sports, and what are the psychological factors that may prevent a physically and technically talented players to reach professional level.

I had some difficulties on drawing the line on what to include on the guide and what to leave out. I wanted to concentrate on the most important qualities. I wanted to include all the important factors to consider about the qualities, but at the same time I didn't want to go too deep because then the reader might get easily bored. I had the goal to make this guide as easy to read and as easy to understand as possible.

One section that could have been included on the guide is the athlete – coach relationship. Even though it is not a quality that affects sport performance, it is important in terms of getting the message for the athlete. Every athlete is an individual, and every athlete should be treated as an individual. This means that the coach should find a way to deal with different kind of personality types. It is not enough that a coach has the knowledge of any given area. The coach should also be able to sell it to athletes.

All of the sections had three main objectives that I wanted to find from the outcome. The first objective was to clearly define the quality dealt with on the section. I think I managed to cover most of the essential knowledge related to all of the qualities. Different coaches have different kind of understanding about the qualities included on the guide. Some coaches have false knowledge. A distorted view of the qualities easily leads to wrong kind of ways to deal with them. That is why it was important to clearly define the qualities.

The second objective was to clearly explain how the qualities affect sport performance. When the coaches have the knowledge about the definition and the effect on sport performance of the qualities, they can more easily detect the athletes that need the most help with psychological factors. I managed to include enough information about the benefits and disadvantages of each quality. Again, I wanted to include the most important information without getting the reader bored or confused.

The third objective was to tell how to improve the qualities. This was the section that I think is the most important one for the coaches to use in everyday coaching. Once the coach is familiar with the definitions and effects on sport performance of the qualities they should concentrate on how to develop them. The guide includes a lot of information about how to develop the qualities dealt with.

The idea for the future is that the different tests included on the guide would be taken for the athletes in the club I work in. This way the coaches could get a better understanding about their athletes as individuals. The coaches should also monitor their athletes behaviour as a part of the group and evaluate the level of self-esteem and the level of anxiety of the athletes. The signs and symptoms presented on the guide will work as a useful tool in the evaluation process.

The planning and making of the guide was a very educational process. I got a lot of useful information to use in the future as a coach. Some of the information was completely new for me and some of the information confirmed the idea that I had. I found new ways to test athletes psychologically that I wasn't familiar with beforehand. I had a

lot of previous knowledge about self-esteem and self-confidence that proved right when I got familiarized with the related literature. The making process of the guide also got me thinking many times if I had worked correctly in different kind of situations in the past. For example I have not paid enough attention on motivating athletes as individuals. In the future I will spend more time on getting to know the athletes I coach as individuals. The project surely changed me as a coach and nowadays I pay more attention to psychological wellbeing of the athletes that I coach than in the past.

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